



NEWS RELEASE

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Support battalion begins early, basic convoy training

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Staff writer

Some Soldiers at Fort Riley crawled through convoy training Feb. 22.

Soldiers of the 610th Support Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, are in what battalion commander Lt. Col. Robert Weaver calls the “crawl phase” of that training. He refers to the training in that manner because his Soldiers are just learning how to think, how to plan and how to react during convoys.

“They have to get so it’s second nature to all of them,” Weaver said.

Six “Humvees” carrying Soldiers rolled out Feb. 22 to practice convoy scenarios northeast of the battalion headquarters located on the northernmost portion of Custer Hill.

This was the first time a lot of the 610th BSB’s Soldiers participated in this kind of training since basic or advanced individual training, Weaver said. When they conduct this training again at the end of March or the beginning of April, it will be some of the most realistic training for these Soldiers, he added.

But, “we haven’t gotten there yet,” Weaver said.

For now, convoy training is about the thought process and working out the kinks and making sure the Soldiers know their roles.

The convoy training transpired on a six- to eight-mile route to and from the 610th BSB motor pool. Soldiers encountered an ambush by three or four opposing forces who had simulators to mimic the noise and effects of a machine gun being fired at them and an improvised explosive device simulator filled with talcum powder.

The attackers took out the convoy's commander during the training, and a Soldier had to step up and make decisions, Weaver said.

Pvts. Santos Lainez and Corey Love played the roles of opposing forces setting off an IED. The two set up a decoy IED with rocks and grass and set up the simulator 20 feet farther down the road. Lainez, who wore a red and white head wrap, kicked up some dirt to give clues that something was out of the ordinary.

Weaver said the Soldiers were trained to recognize these signs and spot the IED before it exploded.

Lainez and Love serve in Company A, the unit that manned that day's convoy training. Neither had played roles as opposing forces before. Both said they trained in these kinds of convoys during AIT.

The 610th BSB troop strength as of Feb. 22 was about 50 percent of its authorized number of Soldiers, Weaver said. He and Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Eddie Fields estimated they would be about 85 percent by the end of June.